

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 03107 131506Z
ACTION SS-25

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-----122965 131509Z /41

P R 131438Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5431
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3107

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, NATO, MPOL, GR, US
SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP ON CLARIFICATION ON EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
PROGRAM

REF: ATHENS 2702

1. WE HAVE NOT AS YET GONE BACK TO AMBASSADOR TZOUNIS
IN CONNECTION WITH THE POINTS HE RAISED ON APRIL 1
CONCERNING THE GREECE-NATO TALKS (PARAS 9-11 OF REFTEL).
SINCE THEN, GOG CONCERN OVER THE AEGEAN NAVAL COMMAND
ISSUE HAS ALSO BEEN RAISED BY MINISTER AVEROFF WITH THE
AMBASSADOR AND BY THE CHIEF OF THE HELLENIC NAVY GEN-
ERAL STAFF, ADMIRAL KONOFAOS, WITH THE DEFENSE ATTACHE,
BOTH ON APRIL 12. (SEE ALSO DAO THENS IR 6-837-130-78, DTG
131230Z APR 78 WHICH DESCRIBES GREEK NAVY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM
NATO CPX APRIL 9 BECAUSE OF THIS VERY POINT.)

2. AVEROFF AND KONOFAOS BOTH MADE THE SAME POINT WHICH
TZOUNIS HAD MADE EARLIER TO THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR, I.E.
THAT WHILE GOOD PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE IN RESOLVING THE
VARIOUS ISSUES IN CONNECTION WITH THE "SPECIAL RE-
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LATIONSHIP" GREECE WAS NETOTIATING WITH NATO, NATO'S
ALLEGED INSISTENCE ON THE TASK FORCE COMMANDER CON-
CEPT, TO REPLACE THE AREA COMMANDER CONCEPT, WOULD
INEVITABLY LEAD TO A BREAKDOWN IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS.
ALL THREE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GOG COULD NOT ACCEPT
NAVAL COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE SPECIAL RELATIONS-
SHIP WHICH WOULD BE LESS FAVORABLE FOR GREECE

THAN THOSE EXISTING BEFORE GREECE WITHDREW FROM THE MILITARY WING OF THE ALLIANCE. MINISTER AVEROFF MADE A FURTHER POINT RELATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TASK FORCE COMMANDER CONCEPT TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE AEGEAN AS IT IS AFFECTED BY THE GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER THE CONTINENTAL SHELF. ITS ACCEPTANCE BY THE GOG, HE ARGUED, WOULD BE VIEWED BY THE TURKS AS A SIGN OF GREEK WEAKNESS.

3. THE NAVAL COMMAND CONTROVERSY HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS IN THE PAST BUT WAS LINKED FOR THE FIRST TIME TO THE ONGOING GREECE-NATO DISCUSSIONS IN AN APRIL 13 ARTICLE IN INDEPENDENT KATHERIMINI (WHICH USUALLY TAKES A PRO-GOVERNMENT LINE AND HAS GOOD SOURCES IN THE GOGO). ACCORDING TO THIS ARTICLE, A GREEK MILITARY COMMITTEE CONDUCTED EXPLORATORY DISCUSSIONS AT SHAPE RECENTLY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GREEK NATO "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" TALKS. THE PURPOSE WAS TO EXPLAIN GREEK VIEWS, THE ARTICLE SAID, AND THE COMMITTEE'S VISIT TO SHAPE WAS DESCRIBED AS A CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH GENERAL DAVOS HAD HAD WITH GENERAL HAIG LAST MONTH AT A TECHNICAL MILITARY LEVEL. NATO'S REPLIES TO THE GREEK VIEWS ARE EXPECTED NO LATER THAN MAY, THE ARTICLE WENT ON, WHICH WOULD STILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BE COMPLETED, AS THE GREEKS WANT, BY THE END OF JUNE. THE ARTICLE THEN CITES DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN BRUSSELS AS SAYING THAT THE GREEK SIDE IS WAITING

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FOR ANSWERS FROM NATO TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:
(A) SETTLEMENT OF THE OPERATIONAL NAVAL COMMAND PROBLEM IN THE AEGEAN, (B) AIR DEFENSE (THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN GREECE AND NATO); AND (C) THE STATUS OF GREEK FORCES IN THE EVENT OF "AUTOMATIC MOBILIZATION" UNDER THE NATO ALERT SYSTEM.

4. ACTION REQUEST: ALTHOUGH WE WOULD AGREE THAT THE EMBASSY SHOULD NOT BECOME OFFICIALLY INVOLVED IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOG CONCERNING THESE MULTILATERAL MATTERS WHICH SHOULD PROPERLY BE HANDLED IN NATO CHANNELS, WE OWE THE GOG SOME KIND OF USG COMMENT IN VIEW OF TZOUNIS' DIRECT REQUEST (REFTEL) AND THE FACT MINISTER AVEROFF HAS RAISED THE MATTER DIRECTLY WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND ADMIRAL KONOFAS WITH THE DEFENSE ATTACHE. WE WOULD, THEREFORE, APPRECIATE RECEIVING GUIDANCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO THE GOG ON THIS ISSUE.

6. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO GENERAL HAIG FOR HIS INFORMATION AND COMMENTS.

MCCLOSKEY

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